

EAC Quarterly Division Award – 2nd Quarter 2015

Victims Services

I would like to nominate West Valley City Victims Services for the Division of the Quarter. Victims Services willingness to always go over and above expectations, and their excellent service to the citizens of West Valley, should be recognized. These three recent examples, all from the same night, illustrate that excellence.

First Merari Lopez assisted a victim who was intimidated by obtaining a protective order and wouldn't have been able to follow through the process without assistance, because she did not have transportation. Merari provided transportation to the court and stayed with her for four hours to get the protective order. During this time Merari also discovered the victim hadn't filled her prescriptions because she didn't have a vehicle, so she drove her to two different pharmacies to make sure she got them filled. Merari then reported to work two hours early the following day to return to the court house so a judge could sign and finalize the paperwork for the protective order.

Second, Alexandra Perez was called out to a scene where a domestic violence victim had been struck in the head multiple times. The victim asked Alexandra if she would go to the hospital with her because she didn't have any family or friends in Utah. Alexandra stayed with the victim while she received medical treatment and afterwards called three different shelters in order to find space for the victim since it wasn't safe for her to return home. Alexandra also purchased food for the victim, paid for with her own money, before taking the victim to the shelter. By the time she returned to the office it was after 9:00 pm.

Third, Sharla Smith had a victim who arrived at the office with her 10-month old baby, after walking in the rain. Sharla gave the victim her own gym clothes and some blankets. She then called four different shelters all of which were full, so the victim called her father in New Mexico and asked him to pick her up. Her father agreed to pick her up the following day. Sharla arranged for the victim and her baby to spend the night in a motel, and then gave the victim some money, taken from her own pocket, to buy dinner. Sharla remained in the office after working hours to make sure the victim and her baby were taken care of.

West Valley City Victim Services, and the citizens of West Valley City are fortunate to have such dedicated and caring victim advocates. All of the hard working advocates have similar stories and the entire division should be honored.

Submitted by J. Eric Bunderson